

Drostle

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POLICY

FOR THE

CONTROL OF CURRENT MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE
INFESTATION

Targhee National Forest

APPROVED:

Alvin F. Wright
Forest Supervisor
Targhee National Forest

5/3/67

Date

M. C. GALBRAITH
Assistant Regional Forester - TM

MAY 15 1967

Date

FLOYD IVERSON
Regional Forester

MAY 21 1967

Date

POLICY FOR THE CONTROL OF CURRENT
MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE INFESTATIONS ON THE
TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Serious mountain pine beetle infestations currently exist on the Island Park, Ashton, Porcupine, Teton Basin, and Rexburg Districts of the Targhee National Forest, with several small spots on the Swan Valley District.

Infestations on State of Idaho, Bureau of Land Management, and various private lands outside the National Forest boundary are an important part of the infested lodgepole stands on the Spencer, Island Park, Ashton, Porcupine, Teton Basin, and Rexburg Districts.

The infestations on the Spencer, Teton Basin, and Rexburg Districts date back to 1958. The Swan Valley, Island Park, and Ashton District infestations began about 1960. The major Porcupine District infestation became epidemic in 1964. Portions of the Spencer and Island Park areas are diminishing in intensity of infestation. Entomological studies indicate that certain areas on the Rexburg District are also leveling off. All other areas show increasing intensity of infestation.

The first recorded epidemic on the Targhee National Forest was in 1927. Since that time, there have been major flareups of beetle infestations in 1930 and 1948. These were successfully controlled. The spread of the beetle, in the present epidemic, has been effectively held down only in areas that have been continuously treated. The first year that complete financing was assured for the entire project, other than the Rexburg District, was 1965. Previously, complete control had been impossible because of lack of adequate funds to initiate the entire treating program as proposed.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

This policy statement concerns treatment considerations, for the present epidemic, of all infested areas on the Targhee National Forest. Timber sales, road construction, and insect-control project proposals will be preceded by multiple use surveys according to instructions. The timber, recreation, and esthetic values are of such high resource value that there is no alternative other than to control the epidemic by the most effective method on all infested areas of the Forest which are practical to treat.

INFESTATION ZONES

The Targhee National Forest infestation has been divided for administrative purposes into five zones: (I) Spencer District, (II) Island Park and Ashton Districts; (III) Porcupine District; (IV) Teton Basin District, Swan Valley District, and that portion of the Rexburg District which includes the Pine Creek drainage; (V) the Rexburg District, exclusive of the Pine Creek drainage, including the Packsaddle and Horseshoe Creek drainages of the Teton Basin District.

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS

Treating

1. Control will be planned in all zones except Zone V (Rexburg) until the infestation subsides or is controlled regardless of timber sales activity within the control areas. An exception to this rule would be no treatment will be undertaken in areas where we are assured that infested trees will be removed by logging prior to beetle flight.
2. The Region should aggressively seek control funds to treat all infested areas within all zones except zone V (Rexburg), of infestation as completely,

thoroughly, and proficiently as possible. The Rexburg District will be re-evaluated periodically to determine if control is feasible.

Roads

1. Give prompt consideration to immediate road needs in the infested area or in areas which have a high potential for infestation. The Reclamation Road is urgently needed for access and should be given high priority for construction.
2. Road construction will be done in an orderly manner with adequate advance planning to obtain full coordination of all resources and be of public acceptance, and will provide adequate water control to prevent damage by spring runoff to both the road and adjoining land.
3. Work roads will be adequately put to bed and revegetated after their need is terminated.
4. Road maintenance will be provided for protection and preservation of constructed roads and adjoining lands.

Logging

1. Timber sales will be made in as many areas as the local mill and logging capacity can absorb. Sales are set up to encourage loggers to get logs out before the insect flight. Logging capacity is not enough, however, in many areas to allow this method to be an effective means of control on large infestations without the aid of other treating methods.
2. An aggressive timber sale program will be continued on epidemic areas until the infestations are brought under control. After control is accomplished,

regularly scheduled harvest cutting will be carried out to reduce the volume of overmature timber and reduce the danger of epidemic recurrence.

3. Insect control planning and financing must include funds for cleanup of timber sales in infested areas to acceptable standards if collected slash and erosion control funds are inadequate. Supplementation with insect control funds should not, however, exceed the cost of treating the area by other control methods.

Regeneration

1. Natural regeneration will be depended upon for reforestation of the cutover timber sale areas, at least for the present. Should the need for artificial regeneration become apparent at a later date, the Region should be prepared to give consideration to Targhee needs within the P&M financed planting program.
2. Size and location of cutting blocks should be so planned to favor natural regeneration. Leave strips will remain for a minimum of three years to provide seed source. Treatment may be necessary in the intervening strips. Larger than normal cutting blocks may be necessary in seriously infested stands, subject to approval of Forest Supervisor and such limitations as are necessary in compliance with the Regional Multiple Use Guides.

Multiple Use Coordination

Each insect-control project will be preceded by a stage 1 and 2 multiple use survey and report to insure that all resource coordinating requirements are met. All control measures will be undertaken within the guidelines as set up in the Regional Guide and District Multiple Use Plans.

Cooperation

Cooperative treating efforts will be continued within existing laws and regulations. Private land owners and the State of Idaho owning infested lands adjacent to the National Forest boundary will be encouraged to cooperatively treat their timber. Most private land owners do not value their timber resource to an extent that they are willing to invest the costs of insect control. It is also difficult for the State to extend financial cooperation. It, therefore, becomes necessary for the Forest Service to treat infestations on nearly all lands with land owner's permission. They will only be treated with Forest Service funds after all efforts at obtaining the necessary cooperation have failed. The Targhee (within Idaho) has been declared an infested area by the Idaho State Forester.

DISCUSSION - ZONE I

Zone I is located on the Spencer District. As nearly as can be determined from available records, the infestation first appeared in 1958 on private and State lands about a mile south of the Forest boundary in Shotgun Valley. Since then, the infestation has spread into Sheridan, Dry, Ching, Howard, and Taylor Creeks. Several control projects have been carried out and, presently, all infestations have been reduced in intensity. The outside land infestation has diminished and appears to have about run its course. Entomological studies have indicated the intensity is leveled off or diminishing in all areas.

POLICY - ZONE I

Suppression efforts will be carried out on all areas of infestation until the epidemic has been reduced to an acceptable endemic level. Timber sales will be concentrated in the Sheridan, Howard, and Taylor Creek areas to harvest

infested trees and overmature potential host trees. Other accepted treating methods will be undertaken on infestations that do not lend themselves to control by logging. Timber sales will be planned so that they are effective in the control of the insects.

DISCUSSIONS - ZONE II

Zone II is located on the Island Park and Ashton Districts. Records indicate that the initial epidemic infestations were in the Willow Creek and Lyle Springs areas in 1962. Since then, the insects have spread to all of the south face of Sawtell Mountain, Moose Creek, Thurburn Ridge, Big Bend Ridge, Jackson Mill, Bishop Mountain, Anderson Mill, and Mesa Falls areas. Control efforts have resulted in the epidemic either leveling off or diminishing on the Sawtell, Moose Creek, Lyle Springs, and Thurburn Ridge areas. An accelerated timber sales program has been and is being carried out on the Willow Creek, Jackson Mill, Bishop Mountain, Lyle Springs, and Big Bend Ridge infestations. The large sale on the Moose Creek area of the Island Park District is in progress. Except as noted above, the infestations on all areas are spreading over new areas but decreasing on treated and logged areas. The heaviest areas are on the Ashton District. The areas on the Island Park District appear to be diminishing in intensity.

Infestations adjacent to the National Forest boundary on the west are still a problem in this zone. In the few areas of timber outside the boundary, the infestations have about run their course, but are still reinfesting National Forest land. Treating of the private land is needed.

POLICY - ZONE II

Suppression efforts will be continued on all areas of infestation until the epidemic has been reduced to an acceptable endemic level. Timber sales will be planned so that they are effective in the control of the insects and will be concentrated in the Bishop Mountain, Anderson Mill, and Big Bend Ridge areas. Other accepted treating methods will be carried out in infestations that do not lend themselves to control by logging. Private lands will be treated through a cooperative program.

DISCUSSION - ZONE III

Zone III is located on the Porcupine District. The infestations on this zone are the most recent and rapidly expanding on the Forest. The entire west boundary of the zone is heavily infested. This heavy infestation has spread attacks over a large part of the zone to the east. The Boone Creek area is presently being treated and is heavily infested. The Calf Creek area borders on Yellowstone National Park. The Boone and Calf Creek infestations appear to be diminishing in intensity; however, the area to the west continues to increase. An intense epidemic situation on private land, along the entire west boundary of the District, increased tremendously in 1965. This infestation has continued without reduction and has contributed substantially to the rapid, intense spreading of the infestation. At present the infestation has intensified throughout the District and has begun to infest trees in Yellowstone National Park east of the District. The infested area extends onto private and State lands along the Forest boundary for as much as ten miles in some places.

Two major and several small timber sales have been prepared for insect control on the Porcupine area. A cooperative treating program is being carried out with land owners along the Forest boundary. So far, a high degree of success has been attained in getting permission to treat private lands in these areas. High priority is given to these areas for treating.

POLICY - ZONE III

Suppression efforts will be continued on all areas of infestation until the epidemic has been reduced to an acceptable endemic level. Timber sales will be made and planned so that they are effective in the control of insects and will be concentrated on the heavy areas of infestation along the western Forest boundary. Other accepted methods of control will be carried out on infestations that cannot be controlled by logging. The cooperative program will be continued aggressively in an attempt to control the adjacent private land infestations. Recent action by the Washington Office has changed the limitation on treating adjoining private land from 10 to 20 percent. Since the current infestation on private land is less than 20 percent of the total infestation, we are no longer restricted in treating private land in this control project.

DISCUSSION - ZONE IV

Zone IV is located on the Teton Basin and Swan Valley Districts, and also the Pine Creek drainage of the Rexburg District. The largest infestation on this zone is the east side of Teton Basin. This is also one of the oldest infestations on the Forest, having started in 1958. It has been chemically treated several times, but is repeatedly reinfested from outside adjacent private lands.

There are several smaller infestations on the west side of the basin, small spots on the south, several large and intense areas in Pine Creek and a limited number of isolated spots on the Swan Valley District. The infestation in this zone appears to be expanding but at a slower rate than other zones. The Swan Valley spots, that have been treated previously, are not spreading but continue to show up on surveys. The area in Pine Creek continues to be infested with no let-up in sight.

With the decrease in the host material available in the main Rexburg infestation, an intensification can be expected in the Pine Creek area.

POLICY - ZONE IV

Suppression efforts will be continued on all areas of infestation until the epidemic has been reduced to an acceptable endemic level. An accelerated access road program will be carried out on the east side of Teton Basin to provide access for the harvest of uninfested, overmature lodgepole pine. Timber sales will be made in this area to eliminate, by harvest cutting, the potential host trees and develop a healthy, insect-resistant stand. The infested areas do not, at present, offer timber sale opportunities. The infestation generally is in younger-age class of timber than is being logged for insect control on other portions of the Forest. Chemical or other accepted methods of control will be carried out. Where infestations are sufficiently concentrated in older-age class of timber, sales will be considered. The cooperative program will be continued aggressively in an attempt to get control on adjacent infestations. If this cannot be satisfactorily accomplished, it will be necessary to continue treating National Forest lands until the outside infestation runs its course.

DISCUSSION - ZONE V

Zone V includes all of the Rexburg District, exclusive of the Pine Creek drainage. It also includes the Packsaddle and Horseshoe Creeks drainages on the north end of the west side of the Teton Basin District. It is the oldest infestation on the Forest, originally detected in 1957 on the west side of the District and on adjacent private lands. Several treating projects were completed, but continued reinestation from adjacent private lands and inadequate funds to treat the entire area in the spring of 1964 allowed the infestation to expand and intensify to the point where control became impractical.

Surveys completed in 1966 indicated over 700,000 trees currently infested and 40 percent of the lodgepole pine over 4 inches d.b.h. have been killed or currently infested.

Lodgepole sawtimber sales were offered and sold since 1960 to the local stud mill as rapidly as factors allowed. Two limiting factors were the milling and logging capacity and the amount of access. Two major roads, Canyon-Calamity Road and Windy Ridge Road, were constructed to provide access. The Garns Mountain Road was reconstructed to also provide access. Ten sawtimber sales were sold from which 11,490 MBM was cut. Another timber sale of 350 MBM, which was sold, yet remains to be cut. Two other timber sales which were recently offered were not purchased. The timber sale areas became increasingly uneconomical to log as reflected by the remaining timber sale which is uncut and the reluctance of bidders to purchase any more of the recently offered sales. A reconnaissance of another proposed sale area, which would be most likely to be an economical sale area, showed too great a mortality to any longer make possible a sawtimber sale. We, therefore, need to conclude that sawtimber

sales can no longer be offered on the Rexburg District for salvage and insect control during the present infestation.

POLICY - ZONE V

At present, the estimated value of the resource to be protected is less than the cost of protection. However, an increase in the product value of the green stand or a reduction in treating costs could reverse this relationship and make protection economically feasible. Periodic re-evaluation of this zone will be continued to determine cost benefit ratio.

Small product timber sales will continue to be made as long as practical. Intense fire prevention measures will be carried out until the danger of flash fire has diminished. In the event of a large fire, resulting from the heavy stand of dead trees, timber and range revegetation projects will be extensively carried out along with erosion control projects where necessary.

SUMMARY

In summary, strong efforts are needed to obtain adequate financing for carrying on an effective insect control program until the infestation is brought into an endemic state in all zones.

Every opportunity should be explored for removing infested trees through timber sales and product sales on all areas. Present mill capacity is filled with current timber sales and should not be planned to materially aid in removal of infested trees. If timber removal does not aid the treating program then no insect control funds should be used to make timber sales.

The infestation at its present intensity is considered to be within ability of the Forest to control if provided sufficient manpower and finances. Complete spraying of the entire infestation in any one year, however, is becoming doubtful due to scope of the infestations. A well-oriented and planned project based on selection of critical infested areas can continue to reduce the overall infestation on the Forest.

If, during any one year, the entire infestation cannot be treated as desired, areas for control will be selected on the basis of land value and effectiveness of the planned treatment. For instance, it is evident that the size of the current project prohibits the treatment of the entire area in the time remaining. It is, therefore, necessary to limit treatment to the area for which an organization can be developed. Treating will therefore be limited to the areas in the northern portion of the Forest including the Island Park, Ashton, and Porcupine Districts, where the value of the resources are greater. Subsequent projects will be planned to cover this same area plus additional areas for which an organization can be developed.

The preferred method of treatment will be timber removal. Timber sales will be encouraged for sawtimber as well as any additional products such as pulp-woods. Cutting of other products will be investigated and encouraged. Trees will be chemically treated either as standing trees or after being felled.

The choice between these two methods will depend upon a number of factors. Major factors will include such items as existing or proposed timber sale areas, logging activity, height of trees, amount of time to complete treating of a specified number of trees, and amount of bid for each method. Treating method will need to be decided for each specific area, recognizing that felling and treating is considered to be the more effective method of the two.

The insect control project will be given the highest priority Forestwide. However, recognizing that the project is extending over a period of more than three years, other Forest projects cannot be sacrificed for that long a period. Selection of detailers on the Forest, therefore, will be based on expecting Regional and Forest Service-wide support by detailer overhead. The insect control can thus be given the proper high priority Service-wide.